



Handbook for Boards of Examiners for Taught Courses and Programmes

Purpose of Policy

The policy provides information regarding the role and operation of Boards of Examiners in order to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Overview

Boards of Examiners take an overview of each student's academic performance on a relevant course or programme, and make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome. This Handbook provides information regarding the remit and operation of Boards of Examiners, and outlines the responsibilities of key roles in supporting Boards of Examiners.

Scope: Mandatory Policy; Appendices are Guidance (Guidance is not mandatory)

This policy applies to Boards of Examiners, and those who support the work of Board of Examiners. Tasks associated with the administrative processes of the Board may be delegated to appropriate academic or administrative staff, but responsibility remains with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.

Contact Officer Academic Services academicpolicy@ed.ac.uk

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Handbook for Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Handbook sets out the main responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and key role-holders involved in the operation of the Board, and provides information on the principles and remit of the Board of Examiners and guidance to help run effective Boards.
- 1.2 The Handbook should be read in conjunction with the University's Taught Assessment Regulations, Exceptional Circumstances Policy, Policy on External Examiners for Taught Programmes and other relevant policies and regulations. The main part of this Handbook is mandatory policy and the information provided in the Handbook Appendices is guidance and not mandatory.
- 1.3 For sources of support and information in relation to this Handbook, see Section 11.

2 Why we have Boards of Examiners

- 2.1 A Board of Examiners is a body with membership approved by the relevant Head of School whose role it is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a course or programme, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome. Boards of Examiners are a key part of enabling the University to judge that students have achieved their intended learning outcomes in a consistent, fair and reliable way, using agreed evidence and processes to reach their decisions.

3 Board of Examiners' Principles and Remit

Principles for Boards of Examiners

- 3.1 The following principles underpin the operation of Boards of Examiners:

Principle 1 The role of the Board of Examiners is to take an overview of each student's academic performance on a relevant course or programme based primarily on assessment results, and to make a final academic judgement on the appropriate outcome.

Principle 2 Boards of Examiners ensure that all students are treated with consistency and fairness, that the assessment process runs smoothly and correctly, that appropriate standards are set and maintained, and that the External Examiner plays an appropriate role.

Principle 3 The effective administration of assessment underpins the University's quality of learning and teaching.



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- Principle 4* Boards of Examiners are conducted according to standard operational procedures defined by the University and using University systems.
- Principle 5* Working within the scope of the overarching remit (see 3.2), and agreed models and accompanying guidance, Schools structure Boards of Examiners according to their own requirements.
- Principle 6* Members of Boards of Examiners and those working in support of Boards of Examiners receive appropriate support for and recognition of their role.

Board of Examiners' Remit

3.2 The overarching remit of Boards of Examiners for Taught Programmes and Courses is:

- to oversee and conduct the entire assessment process according to the University's Taught Assessment Regulations and other relevant regulations and policies, along with the principles approved by the appropriate Board of Studies;
- to ensure that suitably detailed marking criteria are prepared for every item of assessment under the authority of the Board;
- to take responsibility for determining outcomes for students across all elements of courses or programmes for which the Board has responsibility;
- to manage the outcomes of Exceptional Circumstances Committees appropriately;
- to produce a set of outcomes appropriate to the assessments and to record and transmit these as required by regulations and procedures in force at the time;
- to minute its decisions in accordance with current regulation and guidance and ensure that archives of its decisions/minutes and those of any of its subsidiaries are maintained for the appropriate retention period.

4 Who does what?

Authority

4.1 This Handbook, along with the Taught Assessment Regulations and other University regulations and policies set out the authority and responsibility of key office-holders in relation to Boards of Examiners. Colleges and Schools may delegate tasks associated with the operation of the Board to appropriate academic or professional services staff, but responsibility for the delivery of those tasks rests with the formal office-holders. Whenever a specific role is delegated, this must be agreed with the person who has responsibility for the role, and a record kept of the delegations that are in place.



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Appointment of key office-holders

Convener of the Board of Examiners

- 4.2 The relevant Head of School is responsible for appointing the **Convener of the Board of Examiners**.
- 4.3 The Head of School informs the College Office about the appointment of the Convener by the beginning of the relevant Semester for the Board of Examiners responsible for courses assessed in each Semester, and by the beginning of Semester 2 for the Board responsible for programme decisions for each programme.
- 4.4 For combined (formerly joint) degrees the “owning” Head of School liaises with other relevant Heads of School. In the case of any disagreement on the appointment of a Convener of a combined Board of Examiners, the Convener is nominated by the relevant Heads of College or their nominee.
- 4.5 Programme Directors and Course Organisers are not the Convener of the Board of Examiners for their programmes or courses. This is to ensure appropriate separation of roles. If the Convener is also a Course Organiser, formal chairing of the Board of Examiners is delegated to another member of the Board for discussion of that course.

Internal Examiners

- 4.6 The relevant Head of School is responsible for appointing **Internal Examiners**. Internal Examiners are teaching and/or honorary staff of the University who teach on SCQF level 7 to 12 courses which are awarded for credit. Honorary staff in this context include:
- Teachers and senior staff from partner schools to the Moray House;
 - Academic staff from research pooling partners who are appointed as an internal examiner by APRC on the basis of a recommendation from the relevant College;
 - and NHS staff.
- 4.7 There is no requirement that all Course Organisers, or teaching staff involved in teaching courses in a given Semester should be appointed as Internal Examiners. In appointing Internal Examiners, Heads of School must balance the efficient operation of the Board with the need to ensure sufficient expertise across the range of subjects within the Board’s remit.

External Examiners

- 4.8 The relevant College appoints **External Examiners** on the basis of nominations from the relevant Head of School. External Examiners are members of the Board who are not staff of the University. Their role, powers and responsibilities are set out in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy:



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www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

Lists of Examiners

- 4.9 Heads of School approve the list of Examiners for Boards of Examiners for each diet of Boards to be held. Boards need not comprise the same set of Examiners for each diet of Boards to be held, for example following Semester 1 and Semester 2. Any objection to the proposed examiners must be made to the Head of School or their nominee in good time before the relevant exam diet. Complete final lists of examiners are maintained by the relevant School and are available for inspection by members of staff.

Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 4.10 The Head of School is responsible for appointing the **Convener and members of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee**.

Regulations Expert

- 4.11 The relevant School is responsible for appointing a **Regulations Expert** for each Board of Examiners. The Regulations Expert does not need to be a member of the Board of Examiners, and may be a member of academic or professional services staff. Schools may appoint a Regulations Expert to operate across the School or across a number of Boards of Examiners. The role may be combined with another role in the Board.

Secretary to the Board of Examiners

- 4.12 Schools are responsible for appointing a **Secretary** for each of their Boards of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners

- 4.13 A Board of Examiners is composed of the Internal and External Examiners for the courses and/or programmes covered by the Board. The Convener can also invite to attend Board meetings those markers or others involved in teaching or assessment who are not Internal Examiners, but they are not involved in decision making at the Board.
- 4.14 The Board of Examiners is chaired by a Convener and supported by a Secretary of the Board and a Regulations Expert.

Operation of the Board of Examiners

- 4.15 Boards of Examiners hold formal meetings to make final decisions regarding the course and programme outcomes for students. The quorum and operation for formal meetings of Boards of Examiners is covered in 4.17 to 4.22 below.
- 4.16 Much of the work which supports decision-making by Boards of Examiners, including modelling of students' outcomes, takes place outside of the formal



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meeting of the Board, and may involve only a subset of members of the Board, working with professional services staff (see Appendix B for further information). Preparatory meetings held as part of this work do not constitute “meetings” of the Board of Examiners, and do not therefore require a quorum of members to participate. However, it is essential that Boards have access to relevant information considered as part of these preparatory meetings and processes in order to support final decision-making at the formal meeting of the Board.

Quorum of the Board of Examiners

- 4.17 A Board of Examiners meeting is quorate if at least half the Internal Examiners participate and at least one External Examiner participates in and approves the decisions of the Board. No Board may have fewer than two Internal Examiners participating, in addition to the Convener.
- 4.18 In exceptional circumstances and by prior written agreement with the Head of the School, the Convener of the Board may substitute Internal Examiners, providing the substitute members meet the criteria in 4.3.
- 4.19 Each subject area covered by the Board of Examiners must be represented and, whenever practicable, an External Examiner from each subject area should participate. Where more than one School is involved, the composition of the Board reflects the contribution of the Schools to the assessment of the courses or programmes.
- 4.20 The University’s External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy outlines External Examiners’ participation in Boards of Examiners meetings.
www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf
- 4.21 It is not necessary for the same members of a Board of Examiners to attend all meetings of the Board in an academic year, provided each meeting is quorate.
- 4.22 Meetings of Boards of Examiners may be held in-person, virtually, or in hybrid format, at the discretion of the relevant Convener. Where meetings are held virtually, these should operate synchronously wherever possible, with all present members participating in real-time. However, virtual meetings may operate asynchronously where necessary and with approval from the relevant College, provided that a quorum of members participate. Any External Examiner must have sufficient information and access to the Board’s deliberations to allow them to approve the decisions taken by the Board. The minute needs to reflect the nature of their participation.

Convener of the Board of Examiners

- 4.23 The Convener of the Board of Examiners has overall responsibility for the assessment process for courses and programmes covered by the Board, for ensuring that the Board operates within University regulations, and for



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corresponding on behalf of the Board. The Convener may delegate specific tasks to the Course Organiser, Programme Director, School Teaching Organisation (or equivalent), but the Convener has responsibility for the activities set out in 4.24 to 4.28.

- 4.24 Ensuring the Board meets deadlines for the administration of assessment:
- In consultation with the College, School, Registry Services as appropriate, and in line with the key University dates, setting outline dates for meetings of the Board of Examiners at least one year in advance;
 - Commenting on the draft examination timetable distributed by Registry Services;
 - Ensuring that all assessment administration deadlines are met, including those for recording course and programme outcomes in the EUCLID student record.
- 4.25 Ensuring that the necessary activities take place in preparation for assessment:
- Approving the content of examination papers, taking account of the comments of External Examiners; Ensuring that the statement of assessment provided to students of how and when each of their courses and programmes is to be assessed includes information about the Board of Examiners' standard setting and moderation methods;
 - Ensuring the security of, and arrangements for, setting examination papers and assessments, including the robustness of and resources for electronic assessment, examining and marking of assessed work, processing and storing marks and grades;
 - Approving the use of email or other electronic transfer for transmission of draft examination papers and other information to external examiners for their evaluation of the assessment of students provided that appropriate security measures have been taken within the scope of current University computer security guidance;
 - Considering, with the relevant College Dean and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport.
- 4.26 Ensuring the appropriate conduct of marking and moderation processes prior to the Board:
- Ensuring the quality and standards of marking and moderation of members of the Board, as well as those markers who are not members;
 - With the Head of School, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a member of staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment;
 - Coordinating arrangements for marking assessed work and ensuring that all Internal and External Examiners and markers are aware of their responsibilities and of the relevant common marking scheme;
 - Ensuring the operation of appropriate internal moderation processes, and providing examples of students' summative assessments to External Examiners in line with the University's policies / procedures on Moderation;



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- Deciding what action to take if markers consider a student's work to be illegible;
- Investigating cases where a student has failed to complete all assessment components of a degree programme, and ensuring that they are dealt with under the appropriate policy;
- Ensuring that any academic misconduct offences are referred to the School Academic Misconduct Officer for investigation.

4.27 Ensuring the effective operation of Board of Examiners meetings within University regulations, including:

- convening meetings, and informing the Head of School in writing when they delegate this responsibility to another member of the Board (eg where the Convener is also a Programme or Course Organiser, they must delegate formal chairing of the Board of Examiners to another member of the Board for discussion of that programme or course.);
- confirming that the Board is quorate;
- ensuring that summary information about the decisions and recommendations of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee is reported to the Board by, or on behalf of, the ECC Convener;
- applying any penalty imposed by the College/School Academic Misconduct Officer for academic misconduct;
- ensuring that the Board reaches decisions in line with University degree and taught assessment regulations, and, where relevant, any supplementary College rules;
- confirming the detailed assessment results;
- ensuring as part of the formal proceedings of the Board that External Examiners are invited to comment on the structure, content, teaching and assessment of the course(s) and/or programme(s) under scrutiny;
- guiding the Board of Examiners to reach a collective decision (decisions do not need to be unanimous).

4.28 Ensuring appropriate follow-up after the meeting of the Board:

- ensuring that results and decisions are recorded in the EUCLID student record and communicated to students within the deadlines published by Student Systems, and that an accurate minute of the Board of Examiners meeting is produced;
- completing any follow-up activity, concessions, or Convener's action business stemming from the Board meeting, ensuring that this is minuted and recorded appropriately;
- in the event of an academic appeal, providing the minutes of the Board of Examiners' meeting and commenting on the appellant's case;
- in the event that new information comes to light about a decision of the Board, deciding whether to reconvene the Board.



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Internal Examiner

- 4.29 An Internal Examiner must participate as required in meetings of the Board of Examiners. Where an Internal Examiner is unable to participate in a meeting of the Board of Examiners, they must notify the Convener or Secretary to the Board of this as soon as possible.
- 4.30 Internal Examiners are responsible for reaching a collective decision with other members of the Board of Examiners regarding the course and programme outcomes for students within the Board's remit. Where an Internal Examiner has questions or concerns about provisional results being presented to the Board, for example regarding the processes of marking and moderation which have taken place prior to the Board meeting, they should raise these with the Convener.

External Examiner

- 4.31 One or more External Examiners are appointed to the Board of Examiners (see 4.4). External Examiners participate as a member of the Board and agree jointly the decisions of the Board. Full details of the role and responsibilities of External Examiners are provided in the External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf

Convener of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee

- 4.32 The Convener of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (ECC) has responsibility for ensuring that the Exceptional Circumstances Committee operates within University regulations and the Exceptional Circumstances Policy. www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf

Regulations Expert

- 4.33 The role of the Regulations Expert is to act as an immediate source of knowledge and advice to the Board of Examiners about the relevant University regulations and guidance and their academic application.
- 4.34 The Regulations Expert will attend or be available to all meetings of the Board of Examiners and ensures that the relevant regulations and guidance are available for reference at all meetings.
- 4.35 Where the Regulations Expert gives advice outwith the context of a Board meeting, for example in the course of Exceptional Circumstances Committees and academic misconduct investigations, they should consult as necessary with the Convener of the Board of Examiners.



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Course Organiser

- 4.36 The Course Organiser carries out the detailed administration of the course on behalf of the Head of School, including various administrative aspects of arrangements for assessment. Information in 4.20 to 4.24 sets out the Course Organiser's main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners.
- 4.37 Preparation for assessment:
- monitoring and checking the timely setting of examination and in-course assessment work.
- 4.38 Marking and moderation processes:
- co-ordinating arrangements for marking assessed work, ensuring that marks are collected and recorded (in most instances via the Teaching Organisation or equivalent) and that markers are aware of their responsibilities;
 - in line with the University's policies and procedures on moderation, organising and supervising moderation at the course level, and taking action, in conjunction with the Convener of the Board of Examiners if necessary, where inconsistency or unsatisfactory practice is identified, and supervising the recording of the occurrence and the outcome of moderation decisions;
 - liaising with the External Examiners on matters relating to the assessment of the course and arrangements for the Board of Examiners meeting.
- 4.39 Preparing material for the Board of Examiners meeting in line with relevant timelines in the School or Deanery. This includes:
- collating or supervising the collation of marks;
 - checking marks (together with the Course Secretary/Administrator or other colleague as appropriate);
 - preparing reports on cases of academic misconduct identified in their course;
 - liaising with the Secretary to the Board of Examiners on the presentation of provisional results to the Board;
 - briefing the Convener of the Board of Examiners on any complex issues, either directly or via the Secretary to the Board;
 - maintaining continuity in the event of sabbatical leave in the following Semester by ensuring that marks are collected and recorded before their departure, or arrangements made for this to be done, and that all correspondence with students and notes about the assessment are handed over to their successor, with appropriate briefing.
- 4.40 Contributing to Board of Examiners' meetings including:
- presenting the provisional results for their course/programme, noting any particular issues regarding the marking; Course Organisers may present their results directly to the Board, or via a subject area/year representative or equivalent, who presents a number of courses in their area;
- 4.41 Following-up after the meeting of the Board:
- carrying out actions as directed by the Board of Examiners;



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- ensuring that arrangements are made as necessary for re-assessment, whether re-submission of coursework or resit examinations, and that students are aware of any requirements relating to these over and above those notified by Student Systems;
- ensuring that the Course Handbook, EUCLID Course Descriptor and other published information are updated in the light of any relevant decisions of the Board of Examiners, Board of Studies, and changes to University regulations and guidance relating to assessment.

Head of School or nominee

- 4.42 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the School that owns the programme or course are:
- Appointing the Convener of the Board of Examiners, along with the Internal and External Examiners (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
 - Appointing the Convener and members of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee;
 - Appointing markers;
 - Appointing Regulations Experts (see Appointment of Key Office-Holders, above);
 - With the Convener of the Board of Examiners, advising on whether there is a potential conflict of interest for a marker, Examiner or member of staff, which means they should not be involved in a student's assessment.

Head of College or nominee (typically a Dean)

- 4.43 The main responsibilities in relation to Boards of Examiners of the Head of the College or nominee are:
- Appointing External Examiners on the basis of nominations from Heads of Schools;
 - Ensuring that all elements which contribute to the award of a degree from the University are represented by the appropriate number of External Examiners;
 - Advising the Convener of the Board of Examiners, Head of School, or Regulations Expert on the interpretation and application of the relevant University Regulations and guidance regarding Boards of Examiners;
 - Considering, with the Convener of the Board of Examiners and Student Administration, cases of extenuating circumstances which prevent a student from sitting a scheduled examination, e.g. religious reasons, elite participation in sport;
 - Handling concession requests submitted by Boards of Examiners.

5 The principle of anonymity

- 5.1 Anonymity is an important principle for the operation of Boards of Examiners and assessment processes. The Taught Assessment Regulations outline the requirements for:



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- Marking work anonymously when possible (the marker should not know the identity of the student);
- Anonymising marks and grades during processing;
- Retaining the anonymity of a student's work at the Board of Examiners, until the best interests of the student are no longer served by anonymity;
- A final check of the un-anonymised marks and decisions;
- Anonymity for examiners (the views of a particular examiner at a Board of Examiners should not be made known to a student);
- Anonymity of results (there should be no public display in any media of any formative or summative assessment results from any course or programme).

6 Avoiding conflicts of interest

- 6.1 No member of University of Edinburgh staff, internal examiner, External Examiner, or marker shall be involved in any assessment or examination in which they have a personal interest, for example a current or previous personal, family or legal relationship with a student being assessed.
- 6.2 For advice regarding what to do in the event of a potential conflict of interest, see the Taught Assessment Regulations.

7 Business to cover at meetings of Boards of Examiners

- 7.1 Appendix A provides a Template Board of Examiners Agenda / Minute, which sets out core items to cover at Board meetings. Schools may wish to supplement these with additional items where appropriate.

8 Minutes for Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings

Responsibility for minute-taking

- 8.1 Conveners of Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committees are responsible for agreeing an accurate record for each meeting.
- 8.2 The School should decide who is responsible for taking the minutes of a Board of Examiners or Exceptional Circumstances Committee meeting (most commonly this will be the Secretary to the Board of Examiners). Conveners of Boards of Examiners should ensure that the minute-taker is properly briefed for any specific issues that may arise in a meeting.

Minutes of Boards of Examiners meetings

- 8.3 Appendix A provides guidance regarding how to record meetings of Boards of Examiners. When recording the proceedings, follow these general points:
- do not attribute views to an identifiable individual member of the Board;

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- use a student's examination number rather than name when referring to an individual student;
- record the outcome of any vote taken during the meeting;
- where relevant, note any guidance or regulations consulted or invoked.

Minutes of Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 8.4 The general points regarding recording Board of Examiners meetings (see 8.3) and many of the core elements covered in Appendix A (eg Date of Meeting, Attendance and Quorum, Scope of the Meeting) also apply to the minutes for Exceptional Circumstances Committees.
- 8.5 The minutes of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (SCC) will also include:
- The decision taken in relation to each case and the reasons for this decision, along with any recommendations for appropriate action to be taken by the Board of Examiners in response to the circumstances.
- 8.6 The minutes of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee are not circulated to the Board of Examiners. Instead, the Convener should provide a written report of its decisions and recommendations on these matters to the relevant Board of Examiners.

Minutes and Data Protection and Freedom of Information

- 8.7 While the Board of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances minutes are confidential, there are circumstances in which some of their content must be made available on request:
- Under Data Protection legislation a student can make a Subject Access Request (SAR) for the disclosure of comments about themselves.
 - Under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) anyone can request information contained in the minutes or reports but comments about individual candidates are exempt from disclosure. For example, comments about the general standard of the candidates must be disclosed on request.
- 8.8 Prior to disclosing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR or FOISA request, School Information Practitioners should ask the Convener of the Board or SCC:
- Whether the minutes are draft or approved (this should be stated when releasing the documentation); and
 - Whether there are any concerns regarding releasing any particular content in the minutes (this should be taken into account when applying any exemptions and advice sought from the Records Management Section).



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- 8.9 When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a SAR, Schools must only provide identifiable personal information about the requestor - personal information about other individuals must be anonymised. When releasing information contained in minutes in response to a FOISA request all personal information about students must be anonymised. Information is considered anonymised if there are at least 4 individuals to whom the information could refer. Guidance on anonymisation is available on the Records Management website: www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/data-protection/guidance-policies/anonymisation.
- 8.10 When releasing minutes in response to FOISA requests, the names of the individuals that attended the meeting should be disclosed unless there is a justifiable reason not to do so. If the School is aware of a reason not to release the name of an individual, their Information Practitioner should seek exemption advice from the Records Management Section.
- 8.11 School Information Practitioners (www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/foi-practitioners) may seek advice from the Records Management Section regarding the handling of information requests, recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk.

Minutes and Student Academic Appeals and Complaints

- 8.12 The minutes or relevant extract from the minutes of Board of Examiners or Exceptional Circumstances Committee meetings can be taken account in the course of student academic appeals, and may also be relevant to a student complaint. Material produced during an appeal or complaint may receive external scrutiny by the

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University procedures and takes their case to the SPSO.

- 8.13 Where a student requests minutes to assist them with an appeal or complaint, Schools should only provide extracts relevant to the Board or SCC's decisions on the individual's case, along with extracts containing any general remarks which might be held by the student to be relevant to their appeal (e.g. on the involvement of supervisors in the assessment process). When supplying minutes to students as part of an appeal or complaints process, Schools should follow the principles set out above in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.



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Interaction between minutes and communications to students

- 8.14 Where Schools communicate with individual students following the publication of course or programme results (often relating to failure to progress), they should ensure that the explanation that they provide the student for the results should accurately reflect that recorded in the minutes.

9 Retention of Minutes and Papers of Boards of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances Committees

- 9.1 Minutes and Papers of Board of Examiners and Exceptional Circumstances meetings should be retained for 5 years after graduation, withdrawal or other permanent departure from University, or, in the case of lapsed students, 8 years after last contact with students:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/records-management/staff-guidance/retention-schedules/student-records

10 Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

- 10 Appendix B provides an indicative timeline and a summary of key processes associated with Boards of Examiners.

11 Sources of support and information

- 11.1 The Handbook forms part of a suite of support and advice for Boards of Examiners, which also includes briefing and training sessions presented by College Offices and Academic Services, and student record training provided by Student Systems.
- 11.2 Boards of Examiners are supported by office-holders who can provide advice on the interpretation and application of this Handbook and related University Regulations and policies. Each Board of Examiners will have a Regulations Expert (see above). In addition:
- Each College will designate College Office or other College level staff to be available for consultation by Regulations Experts and by Conveners of Boards of Examiners;
 - Academic Services will provide advice on the academic application of regulations;
 - Student Administration and Student Systems can advise on matters regarding examinations and student systems.
- 11.3 In general, queries should be directed in the first instance to the College.
- 11.4 The University provides other sources of information about specific aspects of the assessment process.

- Appeals: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/appeals



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- Exam Hall Regulations: www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/exams/regulations
- External Examining: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/external-examining
- Glossary of terms: www.drps.ed.ac.uk
- Policy and terms of reference for Progression Boards: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ug_progression_boards.pdf
- Exceptional Circumstances Policy: http://www.edinburgh.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf
- Student Systems: www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/admin-support-staff/student-admin-colleges-schools

23 May 2024

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Appendix A - Template Board of Examiners Agenda and Minutes

Confidential
[Name of School]
[Name of Courses/Degree Programmes Covered by BoE]
[Academic Year]
[Date and venue of BoE meeting]
AGENDA / MINUTES

1 Introduction

At meeting:

- Confirm BoE quorate; confirm those present, including Convener, External Examiner(s) and Secretary, and whether members or “in attendance”; confirm Regulations Expert is present or available.

In minutes:

- Record that the BoE was quorate, record the names of those present according to whether they are members of the Board or are in attendance, and note any change in the capacity in which a member is attending (e.g. appointment of an Acting Convener).
- If External Examiner(s) was not present, record the reason, together with alternative arrangements made for their input.
- If the Regulations Expert was not present, confirm that they were available for consultation.

2 Apologies

At meeting and in minutes: note any apologies.

3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

At meeting:

- Remind members that discussions at BoE are confidential.
- Confirm whether the marking processes have been conducted anonymously.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

4 Minutes of Previous Board of Examiners meeting(s) of [Date(s)]

At meeting:

- Invite Board to endorse the minutes as an accurate record.
- Report any Convener’s Actions or matters arising.

In minutes:

- Record these points.

5 Exceptional Circumstances

At meeting:

- Invite Convener/representative of SCC to present summary report.
- Invite Board to agree outcomes for each candidate.

In minutes:

- Record that the Board considered the report.



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- Record each decision along with the main reasons (when recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the decision reached). Where the Board has rejected the recommendation(s) of the SCC, record the reasons for this.

6 Confirmation of course/programme results

At meeting:

- For each course/programme, invite the Course Organiser / Programme Director / Subject or Year representative to introduce the provisional results and to note any particular issues regarding the marking, and paying particular attention to borderline cases.
- Decide on final course or award / progression outcomes.
- Invite External Examiner(s) to confirm that they support the outcomes.

In minutes:

- List each course/programme, with appropriate reference number, and note final results. (Alternatively, the minutes may be supplemented by the Board reports produced in BI Suite.)
- Record details of any modification of provisional marks, grades, or award / progression decision, together with the reasons for these.
- Record the discussion and outcome for any borderline cases.
- Where not all results are available by the time of the meeting, record information on the availability of results for individual students and record the reasons for an award or absence of award.
- In Honours years other than final, record any particular circumstances that will subsequently be relevant to classification.
- When recording decisions for individual students, record the examination number of the candidate and set out the main points advanced during the discussion and the final reasons for the decision reached.
- Should there be circumstances in which feedback on work has not been available which would normally have been used by students in their preparation for examinations, this must be noted in relation to the individual students concerned.
- Record comments by the External Examiner(s) about the examination of the course(s) or programme(s), the performance of the students in general, and their approval of results agreed by the Board.

7 Anonymity

At meeting:

- Once decisions have been taken on course and programme outcomes, lift anonymity and substitute student names for examination numbers, then conduct a final check and agree the results as final.

In minutes:



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- Record when anonymity is lifted, and any change made to marks, grades or class of degree in the event of detection of an error which was not detectable when examination numbers were used.

8 Withdrawals and Exclusions

At meeting and in minutes: note student withdrawals and cases where students may be excluded for unsatisfactory progress.

9 Convener's Action

At meeting and in minutes: note any matters to be dealt with by Convener's Action following the meeting.

10 External Examiner(s) comments

At meeting: invite External Examiner(s) to comment on the structure, content, teaching and examinations of the course(s) and/or programme(s).
In minutes: record their main comments.

11 Any Other Business

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Appendix B - Key timelines and processes associated with Boards of Examiners

Main annual timelines

The following is a summary of the main annual timelines associated with Boards of Examiners. It is indicative, and Schools will be informed of the precise timelines for particular processes on an annual basis. The summary is not exhaustive as Boards may have additional activities in local remits. The timeline is based on the standard University academic year structure and examination diets, and programmes with different assessment cycles may need to adapt the checklist.

August / September

- UG resit assessment diet
- Marking and moderation of UG resit diet and PGT assessments (including dissertations)
- UG resit Exceptional Circumstances Committee (SCC) and Board of Examiners (BoE) meetings
- Record UG resit and progression decisions on EUCLID student record
- PGT SCC and BoE meetings
- Course Organisers check that course handbooks, with assessment statements, are up to date and available to students

Note that Board of Examiner activities in August / September associated with the UG resit diet and PGT assessments should be conducted according to the previous session's assessment regulations and associated policies.

October

- Schools consulted on Semester 1 examination timetable
- Semester 1 examination timetable published
- Record PGT award decisions for November/December graduations on EUCLID student record

November

- Heads of School appoint examiners for S1 examination diet (by 1 November)
- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S1 examinations. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.

December

- S1 examination diet
- Marking and moderation of S1 assessment (continues into January)

January

- Heads of School appoint examiners for S2 examination diet (by 15 January)
- SCC and BoE meetings for S1 courses

- Record S1 course results on the EUCLID student record



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- Latest time for setting date for the next year's January Board of Examiners meetings

February

- Schools consulted on Semester 2 exam timetable

March

- Semester 2 exam timetable published

April

- Latest date for preparing examination papers for S2 examinations. It is good practice to prepare reassessment papers if a resit is probable.
- S2 examination diet starts
- Marking and moderation of S2 assessment (continues into May)

May / June

- SCC and BoE meetings
- Record course results, progression and degree awards on EUCLID student record
- Latest time for setting date for the next year's May / June Board of Examiners meeting
- Communicate progression and award decisions to students
- Taught Assessment Regulations for following academic year published

July

- Schools consulted on resit examination timetable
- Resit examination timetable published

Key dates for recording results on EUCLID student record

The key dates for recording results into the EUCLID student record and communication of results to students is available from Student Systems. Requirements for communicating results to students are provided in the Taught Assessment Regulations.

www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/key-dates

www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations

Key processes for operation of Boards of Examiners

The diagram on the following page provides a summary of key processes to be carried out in the operation of Boards of Examiners.

Key processes for Boards of Examiners

